

REMARKS

Applicant has amended claims 1-4, 6, 8, 11, 18, 20, 23, 24, 26, 28, 30, 33, 40, 42, 45, 47, 50 and 52 as shown above. Entry of this amendment is requested prior to examination on the merits. No new matter has been added by this Preliminary Amendment.

Applicants concurrently file herewith an Information Disclosure Statement citing references identified in a counterpart Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-378039. The cited references, included on the accompanying PTO-1449 include: JPA 6-078147; JPA 9-135332; JPA 63-208366; JPA 2000-036908; and JPA 3-295357. Corresponding English abstracts are provided for each reference, as well as a copy of the Office Action received in the counterpart Japanese Patent Application.

Applicants respectfully submit that none of the references discloses cutting the amount of image data output from the image sensor, storing in a memory the image data for each pixel which is read at a predetermined position for the first time and whose data amount is cut, comparing image data which is read at the predetermined position for the second time and whose data amount is cut with the image data of a corresponding pixel stored in the memory, updating the image data stored in the memory to data having a larger value, and detecting a presence/absence and position of dust and/or dirt on the original table on the basis of the comparison result as in independent claims 1, 23 and 45. In addition, none of the references is believed to disclose setting a threshold value for detecting dust and/or dirt on the original table as in independent claims 11, 33 and 50.

Thus Applicants believe the claims as presented herein to be patentably distinguishable over the prior art.

In the event that a telephone conference would facilitate prosecution of the instant application in any way, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number provided.

AUTHORIZATION

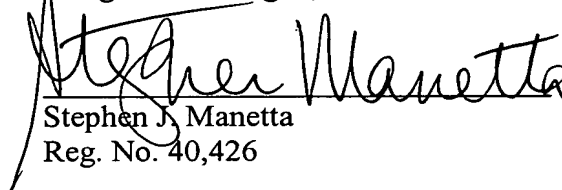
Applicant believes that no fees are necessary for the submission of this Preliminary Amendment or accompanying IDS, however, should any fees be due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any such fees which may be required for this Preliminary Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-4797.

Respectfully submitted,

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By


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